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GEORGE CHRISTOS SOULIS

(1927-1966)

IT is a very sad task to have to write the obituary of a young friend and a promising scholar, especially when I had expected that he would some day write my own. George Christos Soulis was my most able and gifted student when I gave a course on Slavic History and Civilization at Harvard University in 1951. On my arrival in the United States in 1948, he wrote to me of his wish to get a good training in Byzantine and Slavic history. I admired his talent, his easy acquisition of the English, French, and German languages, and his eagerness to get to the bottom of all the problems he was studying.

George Soulis was born at Yannina in Greece on January 4, 1927. His father, director of a high school, gave him a thorough education, and the son always revered the memory of his first teacher, who died in 1951. Soulis' first interest was in the history of his native country, and in 1943 he began to publish articles in *Epeirotika Grammata*, a periodical concerned with the history of Epeiros. After the war he went to Athens and studied in the Philosophical School of Athens University. Then, in 1947, he came to the United States of America to continue his studies, first at Tufts College, then at Columbia University, and finally at Harvard, where he obtained his doctorate. His teachers, recognizing his abilities and excellent character, recommended him for membership in the Society of Fellows, so as to put him in a position to continue his studies. In 1956 he joined the Library staff at Dumbarton Oaks, and became a member of the Faculty in 1957. From July 1, 1957 to August 31, 1961 he served as Librarian of this institution. Thanks to his initiative, Dumbarton Oaks acquired many rare Russian publications by exchange with the principal Soviet libraries. His kindness and charm won him the friendship and affection of all members of the faculty and staff of Dumbarton Oaks.

Wishing to gain experience in teaching, he accepted in 1962 the offer of the University of Indiana to become Associate Professor of Slavic History, but in 1963 he was granted leave to travel to the U.S.S.R. as an exchange scholar and to study at the Historical Institute of the University of Leningrad. His short teaching career at Indiana was so successful that he was promoted to a full professorship. In 1965, however, he accepted an offer of the University of California at Berkeley, to become Professor of Byzantine and Mediaeval Slavic History and it was there that he died suddenly, of a heart attack, on June 18, 1966.

Soulis visited all the Slavic lands to get to know their leading Slavic scholars. He became the finest specialist of his generation in the history of the Balkan countries, and he had been chosen to deliver one of the principal lectures on this subject at the International Congress of Byzantine Studies at Oxford in September 1966, but this commitment remained, of course, tragically unfulfilled. His death is a great loss to American scholarship. It is nothing short of disastrous that he could not carry out the program of research for which he was so well qualified.

Soulis intended to publish his excellent doctoral dissertation on the Serbian Tsar Stephen Dušan, and it is greatly to be hoped that this work will not be lost to scholarship. A full bibliography of his published works, compiled by L. I. Vranousis, may be found in *Epeteris Etaireias Vyzantinon Spoudon*, 34 (1965), pp. 345–347, but the following studies, published in English, deserve the special attention of Byzantinists and Slavists:

1. "On the Slavic Settlement in Hierissos in the Tenth Century," *Byzantion*, 23 (1953), pp. 67–72.
2. "Tsar Stephen Dušan and Mount Athos," *Harvard Slavic Studies*, 2 (1954), pp. 125–139.
3. "Notes on Venetian Modon," *Peloponnesiaka*, 3 (1959), pp. 267–275.
4. "Notes on the History of the City of Serres under the Serbs (1345–1371)," in *Aphieronia Man. Triandaphyllidi* (Thessalonica, 1960), pp. 373–379.
5. "The Gypsies in the Byzantine Empire and the Balkans in the Late Middle Ages," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 15 (1961), pp. 141–165.
6. "Historical Studies in the Balkans in Modern Times," *The Balkans in Transition*, ed. Ch. and B. Jelavich (Berkeley–Los Angeles, 1963), pp. 421–438.
7. "The Thessalian Vlachia," *Mélanges G. Ostrogorsky* (Belgrade, 1963), pp. 271–273.
8. "The Legacy of Cyril and Methodius to the Southern Slavs," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 19 (1965), pp. 19–43.

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